1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4



flock," she cried warningly; "do not shoot. It is only some small wolves; my dogs will chase them away. . . . Sushan! Kasabi!" she shouted, as she urged on the dogs.

Faris lowered his pistol. Tuēma took it out of his hand and replaced it in his belt; but she did not release him. Timidly she pressed herself against him, her arms about his hips. Her garments fluttered faintly, stirred by the warm dry breeze. The steppe exhaled its perfume. The air was saturated with a scent like that of lavender. Dawn had come, revealing the woolly backs of the huddled sheep, now quiet again. From far away, growing fainter and fainter, came the barking of the dogs, still chasing the wolves. Close by, our tethered horses snorted.

Faris gently disengaged himself from Tuēma's arms and, taking her by the hand, led her to the tent, where they sat down side by side. As he leant towards her and kissed her on the top of the head, Tuēma drew the curved poniard from his belt and put it in her lap.

"Let this dagger rest in my lap," said she. It was thus she reminded him of her virginity. Among Bedouins of pure race, a girl's chastity has been, and still is, the most sacred rubric in the tribal code of honour. For its violation a father may kill his daughter, a brother his sister, and have her flesh cut in pieces.

The sun broke through the veils of the morning, shooting flaming fingers across the heavens, and the dark earth glowed rosily. "Sabah!" whispered Faris to his beloved. *Sabah* means the morning, but it is also a poetic word for "virgin bride." Tuēma leaned her cheek to his.

So they sat, motionless, without a word. Then Tuēma

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buck's carcass and handed me the bloody trophy. Then she picked up her carbine and, like a boy, vaulted on the back of her horse with a single swing over its flank and a twist of her body. She gave us a roguish parting look and rode off.

Faris gripped me hard by the shoulder. "She is as shy as a gazelle fawn," he exclaimed ecstatically. "And can there be another maid as beautiful as she?"

The following day Faris fetched me to go on a visit to Tuēma's household. After we had exchanged compliments with her father, Surhan, we went to the women's quarters. Tuēma was there alone; the other inmates of the harem had gone out.

Faris put his arms about his beloved. "My wild he-ostrich," she greeted him, nestling her head on his shoulder. "My little ostrich-hen," he replied.

Tuēma presently handed her lover one of the Bedouin bread-loaves, which was twisted together in the manner of a dumpling. It contained a small sugary cake of Tuēma's own making, the traditional offering of an espoused Bedouin maiden to her husband-to-be. Faris broke it into three pieces, sharing it with the girl and me. He thanked her gravely and then, stroking her hair, he said: "In exchange for this I shall gather for thee a bouquet that shall not wither, and I shall bring thee also a pair of silver ankle-rings."

Tuēma laughed and held out her hand. "No bigger than the tip of my little finger are the flowers of our wilds, and thou dost promise to pick a bouquet for me? And where wouldst thou find silver bangles where there is no silversmith?"

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584 "In truth, loveliest maid, O my mistress, I shall pick for thee a bunch of rare flowers wherewith to adorn thyself for our festive hours in the hills," he insisted.

Still incredulous, she mocked at him, gaily rumpling his head till she had pulled off his *aghal* and *kaffiyah*.

"Oh, how untidy thou art!" she exclaimed.

302 Six dishevelled tresses had tumbled over his shoulders. She drew him closer and put his head in her lap. Then she set about rebraiding in proper fashion his Ishmaelite locks. From the flap of her head-cloth she took a handful of dried gazelle dung; small blackish-green capers. They spread an odour of thyme and camomile as she crumbled the pellets between her palms and rubbed the stuff, like a scent-powder, into the long strands of hair. Faris kept as still as a mouse, without a word.

000 At last she had completed her task. Faris replaced his head-dress; then he declared: "Now it is the turn of Aziz!"

Whether I would or no, I too must put my head in Tuēma's lap and let her, with Faris's assistance, plait my mop into little pigtails and powder them with her exotic perfume. What a sight I must have looked! I always regret that I did not have my photograph taken then. At all events, Faris and Tuēma grew so merry over their handiwork that people from the neighboring tents came running up and burst out laughing at "Aziz Radhwan."

As Faris and I were leisurely riding homeward that night, we heard distant hoof-beats behind us. The sound rapidly grew, and there came a rush of riders—twelve or more Bedouins on swift steeds. In the moonlight I saw their long locks and head-cloths fluttering, their shep-

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# XIII

## *Tuēma*

IT WAS THE day after our return. Faris and I were lying on a hillock, idly watching his father's roaming herds. He spoke of his sweetheart with emotion and somewhat quaintly: "She who approaches in the camel-litter"—"she who is hidden behind the veils of the riding-tent"—"the guarded one"—"the strong *dhalul* shall carry her through the deep shadowy valley until the rising sun reddens her cheeks with its radiance——" 584

Faris was a poet, and in love.

A Bedouin maiden came riding by on a camel, driving another camel with its calf before her.

"Mawia!" cried Faris. It was a friend of Tuēma. She slid from her *dhalul* and spoke to the animals, which obediently stopped and waited.

"Where is my sister?" Faris asked.

She smiled and answered: "Tuēma hath awaited thy home-coming day by day."

Faris stood up and went close to the girl. "When thou meetest her," said he, "bid her remember those nights when she and I met in secret. Tell my beloved that I long to walk with her in the sand dunes. The trail of her gown will obliterate our footsteps, and none shall know where we abide."

"Faris!" the girl protested.

"Tell her the blade of my dagger reminds me that I

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shall never be at peace until the slender blossom bends before the storm of my love," he said.

A few hours later Tuĕma came. Her friend had given her the good news of her lover's return.

She appeared over the brow of a hill. Then she drew rein and leapt from her sorrel, drawing the halter between its forelegs and tying it over the left hock; thus the mare was free to graze, but could not run away.

Tuĕma walked toward us with the grace of a fawn and we went to meet her. She put her arms around Faris's neck and said tenderly: "O thou, my life." And he replied: "O thou, my faith." Then we sat down together on the hill-top.

Tuĕma cast her eyes about and asked with a mischievous laugh: "Where is my bunch of wild flowers? My big beautiful bouquet?"

"Thy bunch of flowers?"

"Yes, and the silver anklets?"

Faris put on an air of importance and jingled the trinkets which he had in his pocket. Tuĕma then gave him a look of surprise and, jumping up, reached for the hand which he had thrust into his pocket; but with the other he held her arm fast and said: "Thou must shut thy eyes and not open them until I have kissed them."

She did as he bade her. Then he drew from his pocket the silver bangles which he had procured in Jauf and slipped them on Tuĕma's ankles. She begged and begged to be allowed at least one look at the gift. "Not yet," cried Faris; "first I must deck thee with the flowers of the desert, the imperishable ones."

One by one the enamoured youth unloosed the ends

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584 of the girl's glossy, black braids and twined into them
431 fourteen magnificent white ostrich plumes, each a foot long. When he had done this, he drew the long tresses forward over her shoulders and gathered them into one hand, so that the shivering plumes formed a bouquet, and kissed her eyelashes. "Here, my sister," he said, "is the bouquet I promised thee, of everlasting flowers."

She opened her eyes and gazed with wonder on her lover's gift. Then she buried her face in the plumes and twined her arm about him.

584 Faris leaned his head on her shoulder, and placing his
834 hand over her heart, said: "It jumps like a wild rabbit."

"It will become quite tame in thy hand," she murmured.

"Hast thou never before permitted a young man to put his hand on thy heart?" he asked.

Tuĕma flushed. "No, never; only thee."

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## CHAPTER VII

### MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

It is the duty of every Rwejli capable of procreation to marry. This duty is laid upon him by his connection with his kinsmen. The more numerous these are, the more power and influence they possess. The individual who refused to defend the rights of his kin would be expelled, and whoever deliberately declined to multiply its defenders would meet the same fate. Without his kin, *ahl*, the Bedouin would be the most wretched of beings. 581 602 183

To marriage the Rwejli is led by mutual inclination or love. A boy of twelve has a liking for a girl of the same age, and it is generally recognized; no one objects. It is said: "Love comes from Allâh, *al-maḥabbe min allâh*." The boy calls on his beloved in her tent, talks with her there, helps with the work, and the parents recollect the time of their first love. An older boy may join his sweetheart where and whenever he wishes to. He helps her water the camels, draw the water, strike and pitch the tent; he attends her on the march, and pays her a visit in the evening. Usually they meet in a tent that is either vacant or little visited. The Šarârât women whose husbands are serving as herdsmen or who are widowed gladly lend their small tents, *ǧarîbîâ*, for the lovers' meetings. There in the cold seasons of the year they sit all night by the fire, parting only when the morning star makes its appearance. In the warm season, especially when camping in the Nefûd, the lovers sit down on a sand drift in the shade of a tall *rṯṯ* bush to talk of everything and nothing. Their love they declare to each other in these words: 584

"Thou art the slumber of mine eyes, *enti nowm 'ajni*; thou art my desire, *ent murâdi*; thou art my food and drink, *enti akli u-širbi*; thou art my creed, *ent dîni*," and so on.

The enamored Rwejli likes to say: "I wish to fast and pray, but only in honor of those with loosened hair; in honor of Allâh's countenance I shall not pray; *ana-nim u-salli lad-ǧeṯâṯ al-'aššâṭ u-illa lewǧh allâh mâni msalli*." Or: "I will not

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584 pray until I get her who warms me in her broad sleeves; then I will pray; *mâni mṣalli lawla' ḥaṣṣ li ṣâfi ar-rdân ṣallejt.*"

## LIMITATIONS ON THE CHOICE OF A WIFE

582 In the choice of a wife the Rwejli is considerably limited. He must not marry the divorced wife of his father nor her daughter, not even if she was begotten by another man. He is not allowed to marry the divorced wife of his son or his son's widow, the mother of his wife, the daughter of his brother or sister. Neither may he marry his foster sister. No member of the Eben Ša'lân kin will take to wife a daughter of the Ḥwêṭât or Beni 'Aṭîjje tribes nor allow his daughters to marry any of them. Neither the Ḥwêṭât nor Beni 'Aṭîjje are by birth equal to the Eben Ša'lân, because they paid, as late as the first half of the nineteenth century, a tax for protection, *ḫuwa*, to the despised Šarârât tribe and camped with them as their *ḫuṣara*, or protected neighbors.

619 No Rwejli dares marry a member of the Ṣlejb, al-Ḥawâzem,
554 al-Fhejğât, Šarârât, or 'Âzem tribes. All these are also called
582 Htejm. They have their chiefs and their social organization,
565 they live in tents and breed camels just like the other Bedouins, and yet they are not held in esteem. The reason is that they pay a tax for protection, *ḫuwa*; that they are neither able to protect themselves nor gain full independence. Being thus compelled to buy the protection of the more vigorous tribes, they are not allowed to enter into blood relationship with their protectors. They are *ḫuwân*, they pay *ḫuwa* — and their sons will pay too. Their countenance, or honor, is as white as that of the Rwala, but they are not held in the same esteem. They do not live with the Bedouins as strangers, but as neighbors, *ḫuṣara*. If they serve them, they serve them as *fedawijje*, free servants, which is not considered a disgrace because members of large Bedouin tribes also hire themselves as *fedawijje* to the more powerful chiefs.

582 A Rwejli cannot marry the daughter of a blacksmith,
326 *ṣâne'* (pl., *ṣuwnâ'*) or other mechanic who camps with the Rwala or lives in their settlements. It is said of the *ṣuwnâ'*, that they are no *aṣîlîn* — that is, that they have no recognized genealogy — and even that nothing is known about their true descent, as they marry newcomers from various towns,

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settlements, and tribes regardless of whether they are autonomous, free, dependent, or slaves.

Marriages with slaves are also forbidden. A man marrying a slave would be killed by his kin, *akl*. No one dares defile the blood of his kin.

Moreover there are inequalities even among the free Arab tribes. All those belonging to the 'Anese group consider themselves aristocrats, hold the other tribes in contempt, and dislike forming matrimonial bonds with them. The children born of such wedlock often hear these ironical remarks:

"Thou wilt come to nothing, for thou art only half a Rwejli; blood will not mix well with blood; thou wilt resemble thy mother's kin," etc.

### *Rights of the Eben al-'Amm*

The children of parents descended from the respectable old 'Anese families are the best. Yet even here the bridegroom is not entirely free in choosing a wife, for according to the ancient custom every girl is to wed the nearest young relative whom it is permissible to marry, *eben al-'amm*. This is, generally, a son of her father's cousin; should this cousin have no sons or if the grandfather had no brothers, the girl falls to the nearest kinsman descended from the great-grandfather's brother. The *eben al-'amm* occasionally claims the girl, *jehağğerha*, exclusively for himself, but, even if he does not, the girl cannot marry without his consent, for it is said: "No one but the nearest kinsman can tie or untie her, *'oḳdha w-ḥallha bjad eben 'ammiha* (sic!)." Only when her father wants to marry again and gives her in exchange for his new wife, *jebaddelha bnafsh*, is the *eben al-'amm*'s claim null and void. On the other hand, if the girl refuses to be wedded to her *eben al-'amm*, he may kill her without becoming liable for compensation.

If the *eben al-'amm* knows that the girl will not hear of him, being already in love with someone else, he forbids the marriage and the girl grows old.

If the father of the girl claimed by her *eben al-'amm* dies and the girl loves another, she goes immediately after the father's death to the relative who claims her exclusively for himself, called in this case *ḥağğir*, and asks: "My father has passed away; I want thee to release my neck; I want thee

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582 to release me in return for my father, who has passed away; *ana abûj râḥ abṛik teǧûz min ruḳubti abṛik tedaššerni ʿawâz* 584 *abûj râḥ.*" The *ḥaǧǧir* is expected to take pity on her and allow her freely to choose a husband for herself, but nobody can compel him to do so.

588 In case of his refusal there is nothing left for the girl but to elope. She flees with her youth to some distant tribe; 684 there they put themselves under the protection of a powerful 583 chief, *jinḥâšûn jamm al-ʿarab jetazabbenûnkom.* They can then marry and live as man and wife in the same tent but are always threatened with the revenge of the *eben al-ʿamm.* An elopement is punished in the same way as murder, and the thirst for revenge must be satisfied.

ʿAǧâǧ al-Mšêḥi was in love with a Rwala girl and wanted to marry her. To this her *eben al-ʿamm* would not consent. After three years of hopeless love, *mutaḥâwin ḥw w-ijjâha talât sinin,* ʿAǧâǧ fled with his sweetheart to the Ahl aš-Šemâl, tribes camping in the neighborhood of the Ḥawrân. As soon as the news spread next morning that the lovers had escaped, *innakom minḥâšin,* the *eben al-ʿamm* with his kinsfolk mounted their camels and went in pursuit of the lovers, *ṭalab.* But ʿAǧâǧ reached his destination, was given a tent, and was united to the girl in marriage. His kinsfolk offered the pursuing relative a ransom, but the latter steadily refused. Leaving his tent two months afterwards, he went in search of ʿAǧâǧ, whom he found and killed with his young bride. Returning home, he demanded in the name of his kin from the kin of ʿAǧâǧ the blood money for seven murdered men, because the murder of an eloped woman, *ḥemâṭa,* is valued at that of seven men. Her lover should not have eloped with her, but, having done so, he should have protected her better, knowing the danger with which she was threatened.

If the *eben al-ʿamm* kills the man who has eloped with the girl, he pays only half of the blood money, as the eloper was himself the cause of his own death.

Dîbân, the white slave of Meǧwel's family, fell in love with a Rwala girl, who returned his affection. Both knew that they could never belong to each other, for a slave, though white, dares not marry even the poorest Rwala woman. So they decided to escape to some settled country and to live in one of the villages there. But they were pursued and the girl was killed by her own brother.

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A single Rwejli of the 'Abdelle clan eloped with a white slave girl. The search for him proved useless — he disappeared without leaving a trace. Should he ever return, he would be killed by his own kin.

When a youth wishes to marry a certain girl, he confides his secret to some older friend, begging him to find out from his father whether he agrees to his wooing or not. It is considered bad form, *'ajb*, for the son to ask his father for this permission. The father, who as a rule knows all the time which girl the son has chosen, says after hearing the news: "If it is Allâh's will, it will be good. Be it blessed. This day is already gone; to-morrow we shall realize his wish; *al-jowm fât bukra nakẓi ṛaradeh*." Next day the father goes with some prominent man to the father of the girl. They sit down, exchange greetings, talk about various matters, and finally say:

"We want thy daughter X for the youth Y, *nabṛi minak bintak al-flâne lil-walad al-flâni*."

"All right. Salt cannot be increased except with salt again. *Ṭajjeb mâ-zâd al-meleḥ il'a-l-meláḥ*. I am satisfied. Let them beget children together. Speak with her cousin, *eben 'ammha*."

Then they go to the *eben al-'amm*, sit down, salute, and converse a while. The youth's father rises, beckons to the cousin or the second cousin, leaves the tent with him, and they squat down at some distance from the tent, where nobody can hear them.

"We give thee good evening, *mamsalk bel-ḫejr*."

"Oh, good evening to you both! *já masa-l-ḫejr*. You surely did not come to me without desiring something, *má-ntom bela ja ṛaraḍ*."

"Yes, we come with a certain desire; *na'am ǧájin bel-ṛaraḍ*."

"Then speak! *ekreǧú*."

"May Allâh add to thy days! We want her for him, and what thou desirest we hold ready for thee."

Now if the *eben al-'amm* agrees to the girl's marriage, he says: "I want this and that." If he does not, he answers: "She is destined to be my wife. I will not give her." But if he has no intention of marrying the girl himself and wants no compensation, he ends the parley with the words: "I wish you well."

The dowry or price demanded for the bride is expressed by the word *sijâḳ*. This means only the value put on the bride

586 who desires to be released for a compensation is called *'ajûf*.
562 All she can do is to appeal to the sympathy of her kin. She
602 calls on either her father, brother, uncle, or cousin, pleading: "I do not want him! Return what you have received from him!" But they try to evade her request with the words: "Go back! Thou surely wilt get used to him!" She, however, keeps on begging until she finally persuades one of them to help her. If she does not succeed and they all refuse to do anything for her, nothing remains for her but to elope, for should she seek protection from others against her own kin the father or brother could kill her, as she is considered to be the property of her father. He begot her, and her brother inherits her from him.

A man who divorces his wife, even if she h... stayed only one night with him, must give her a camel and a pack saddle, *hedâğe*. Nobody has the right to take these away from the woman thus divorced, *mu'allaka*. Yet anything in addition, *karam*, received from her husband his heir may demand back. The trousseau bought for her by the husband belongs to her only. In case she has young children she takes and cares for them till the age of seven; then they return to their father's tent.

587 In the later stages of pregnancy the divorced wife may
851 remarry at once. If her pregnancy is not yet visible, she has
691 to wait at least six months, *'cha 'edda*, and as soon as it is clear whether or not she bears the seed of her husband in her womb, she may become the wife of another. The Rwala fear quarrels and lawsuits regarding the paternity of a child born after a married couple has separated and therefore require the woman to wait. The disregard shown by the chiefs for this rule is often a cause of protracted litigation.

851 Thus, to give an instance, the chief Fahad eben Hazzâ
584 eben Ša'lân divorced his wife, whom before long another chief, Ḫalaf âl Iḍen, took to his tent. After about a year she gave birth to a boy to whom she gave the name of Ṭrâd and who grew to maturity in the tent of his father; but when he was about to marry he quarrelled with his father and moved to another tent. This was due to the story told him by his old slave that he was not the son of Ḫalaf but of Fahad, who had in the meantime become the prince of the Rwala. To Ṭrâd Prince Fahad naturally seemed much grander than a small chief like Ḫalaf, and therefore he at once went to him,

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introducing himself as his son. Without giving the matter much consideration or making long inquiries, as he was at feud with Ḫalaf, Fahad acknowledged Ṭrâd as his son and asked his brother an-Nûri to give the young man his daughter to wife. But when an-Nûri acquainted the girl with this proposal she swore that she would never consent. On learning of this Fahad commanded an-Nûri, whom he wished to ruin: "Either thou bringest thy daughter to the *ḥeǧra* tent thyself, or it will be done by me without thy consent." An-Nûri therefore bade his female slaves to get the *ḥeǧra* in readiness and to bring his daughter there after sunset. The girl, however, in the meantime had persuaded her brother Nawwâf to wait for her at night by the place reserved for the riding camels and to save her from Ṭrâd. When this youth entered the *ḥeǧra* she began to converse with him, pretending to be sorry that she knew him so little and saying that she should be much happier if he would marry her for love and not from compulsion; and when Ṭrâd tried to assure her that she had already been the object of his desire for a long time, she asked him for proofs. Ṭrâd now began to cite at some length all the instances where and when he had seen and inquired about her, by whom he had sent word to her, etc. The time flew and the moon set. Suddenly she rose asking Ṭrâd's permission to step out in order to satisfy a natural necessity. Ṭrâd nodding his consent, she left to return no more. To the man guarding the female riding camels she gave the same reason that she had given Ṭrâd and then walked some distance farther into a small gully where Nawwâf was waiting for her with a saddled she-camel. He then leaped into the saddle, she took her seat behind him, and on they rode to Eben Ǧandal.

Ṭrâd was patiently waiting for his bride in the tent all this time. Realizing at last that the girl had outwitted him, he was ashamed to alarm the camp and said in the morning that she had left with his consent. That very day Fahad received a visit from the chief Ḫalaf âl Iḍen with his wife, Ṭrâd's mother. Both swore that Ḫalaf was the real father of Ṭrâd, because, after having wedded Ḫalaf, the youth's mother had still had her monthly period three times in succession. Yet Ṭrâd appealed to Fahad to protect his son and not to believe a false oath. Fahad finally declared that Ḫalaf must appear in court at al-'Ela. The latter duly went to this settlement

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851 584 [695] with three witnesses and, appealing to the judge there, laid his case before him and asked him for his decision. The judge took a long iron spoon used in roasting coffee, stuck it in the fire, and, when it became red-hot, asked the witnesses to examine Ḫalaf's tongue. As soon as this had been done, the judge quickly lifted the hot spoon to Ḫalaf's mouth. Ḫalaf licked its red-hot part, rinsed his mouth with water, and showed his tongue to the witnesses anew. As the tongue was not burned, they declared Ḫalaf's oath to be true. The judge, *al-mballe'*, received from the latter fifty *meǧidijjât* ($45) as his fee. Ṭrâd was acknowledged to be his son, and an-Nûri's daughter kept her single state, because, Ḫalaf's son not being her cousin, Ṭrâd had no claims on her.

834 562 A married woman, *mara berkubat raǧǧâl*, has plenty of opportunity to make the acquaintance of other men. Divided from the men's part of the tent by only a low, thin, almost transparent partition, she can observe and hear all the visitors and guests who call. While the tribe or clan is migrating she is often joined by some member of the clan, or at least of the camp, who helps her to pack, to lift, or to tighten the loosened loads; accompanies her on trips for water, fills the water bags, and ties them to the water saddle; sometimes he meets her as if by accident when she is bent under the burden of dry fuel, loads it on his mare or she-camel, throwing it down only when the camp is reached; altogether there are countless accidental meetings of this sort. But that man ingratiates himself with the woman most of all who defends her and her camels when attacked by the enemy on the march. To such a protector her heart is given.

586 837 Of her love for another man no secret is made by a woman, and soon it is said publicly: "So and So's wife is in love with So and So, *marat flân ḥawǧânaten 'ala flân*." If this comes to the husband's ears and he is a man of a magnanimous disposition, he releases her without raising objections and asks no compensation, although he is entitled to the return of the dowry he had given for her. A man of this kind is wont to say: "She is a free daughter of a free tribe. Allâh made her love another man, so I will not hinder or make a slave of her." It is only the base men, *arâḏil an-nâs*, who take advantage of their wives' love to benefit themselves, asking five and even ten times as much as they themselves had paid. Such a demand is called *ḫejje*. If his wife's lover